

Early Morning Fire Razes Astoria Country Club

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Season's First Hurricane Aims At Tampa Bay

MIAMI, Fla. (AP) Tropical storm Abby developed into hurricane shortly before noon today and aimed her torrential rains and screaming winds at west Florida's avily populated Tampa Bay area.

"We are now calling the storm a hurricane," said forecaster il Frank at the National Hurricane Center in Miami. "Her top nds are reaching 75 miles per hour in gusts and the storm ould reach the Tampa Bay area by late afternoon."

Area Gets .4 Inch Downpour

astoria area experienced what probably the greatest ount of rain in a short period ever occurred so late in the son, the US Weather bureau orted Monday.

he downpour, totalling 4.4 es, began at about 1 p.m.

At noon, Abby was centered 170 miles south-southwest of Tampa at Latitude 25.6 north and Longitude 83.3 west. The storm was moving northward at about 15 miles an hour.

Abby whipped up early Sunday, the second day of the six-month hurricane season, near Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. Dr. Robert H. Simpson, director of the hurricane center, described development of the storm as a "screwball situation" caused by the merging of a cold front with a low pressure system.

Moving about 15 m.p.h., Abby crossed the western tip of Cuba where she dumped about a foot of rain in 36 hours. Reports from the Communist island said

44-Year-Old Clubhouse Destroyed



Fire had pretty well accomplished the destruction of the clubhouse at Astoria Country club when Daily Astorian photographer Don Roberts took this shot Saturday morning. The

building was erected in 1924, remodeled in 1947, and remodelled again this year. Destruction was total, but a nearby newly-built pro shop was saved.

Building

Structure to Be Replaced; Cost Said \$300,000

The 44-year-old, recently remodelled club house of Astoria Country club burned to the ground early Saturday morning in a fire of unknown origin.

George Abrahamsen, country club president, said the building will be rebuilt, but that current thinking is to erect some sort of a temporary structure to serve during the coming summer season.

Insurance will come to around \$160,000 or \$170,000, it was estimated, the exact amount to be determined by an appraisal.

It will cost around \$300,000 to replace the structure, Abrahamsen estimated.

The club had spent around \$75,000 or more on extensive improvements this year, which had just been completed. These included new kitchen, new lockers, extensive remodelling of the main lounge and other improvements.

Pro Shop Saved

The newly-built pro shop, about 60 feet north of the clubhouse, was saved despite a southerly wind that blew flames and cinders in its direction.

Club officials credited the Warrenton, Gearhart and Hammond fire departments, which responded to the alarm, for saving the pro shop.

Included in the loss was personal belongings of 168 members in lockers, estimated at around \$200 average for each locker contents. Personal insurance of members was expected to cover these losses.

The fire was discovered at 5:45 a.m. Saturday by Joe Schneider, assistant professional, and a party of workmen who were arriving to begin work on the greens. They saw smoke coming from the building. They called Marlow Quick, the club professional, who lives nearby, and he summoned firemen. But before they could arrive the building had burst into flames.

Will Investigate

The fire started in the southern wing of the building, which houses the bar.

There was no evidence of incendiary origin, but the state fire marshal was to send an investigator Monday to check the ruins for any evidence of arson.

At first it was suspected someone might have broken in to rob coin vending machines, and perhaps started the fire. Money in a cigarette machine was at first thought to be missing, but later was found in a melted lump.

Abrahamsen said temporary arrangements will be made to handle three major tournaments scheduled this summer. First of these is the Oregon Coast tournament the last week in July. Following will be the Oregon Golfers association tournament in August and the Oregon Senior tournament in September.

